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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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December 12, 1994

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Tony Gallegos, Reclamation Engineer

RE: Site Inspection, BLM, White River Oil Shale Project, M/047/017, Uintah County, Utah

Date of Inspection: November 30, 1994
Time of Inspection: 11:45
Conditions: Clear, cold
Participants: Stan Perks, Alan Rabinoff - BLM State Office; Howard Cleavinger, Gary Hunter and Pete Isaacson - BLM Vernal District; Lyle Stott - DWQ; Wayne Hedberg, and Tony Gallegos - DOGM

The BLM is currently considering reclamation and closure options for this site. A fixed sum of money is available for this work. The purpose of this inspection is to familiarize the different agencies with the conditions at the site and in the mine to have a better understanding of the various options being considered.

We examined the main shaft and headframe. The shaft is approximately 36 feet in diameter. The shaft is currently open, but fenced to prevent public access. In addition, access to the mine site is controlled by a locked gate. We next visited the ventilation shaft and fan. The fan structure is a metal building mounted on concrete and bolted down. Metal doors inside the fan housing are currently closed. Next we inspected the runoff and emergency flood control dam. We then proceeded to the main office/ warehouse/shop building in preparation for the underground part of the inspection.

Waste rock removed during mine development is piled in various areas nearby. The material is mostly sandstone and shale which appears to be fairly inert.

We proceeded underground by means of the diesel pickup that the BLM has used in regular maintenance of the facilities. We examined the metal doors just inside the mine on the slope. We examined the water seep on the upper part of the main decline. This seep has very little flow and dries up within a short distance down the slope of the decline.

We then examined the ventilation bore hole. This bore hole is where the water and/or oil is piped up to the surface.

We continued down the slope and examined the areas where shotcrete on the walls has deteriorated and fallen to the floor due to water pressure behind the shotcrete. This area was heavily grouted when this decline was originally driven. The upper portion of the decline was driven using a boring machine. This left the rock in the upper portions of the decline slope more intact. The deeper sections of the decline slope were driven using conventional mining techniques; i.e. drilling and blasting. The rock walls on the lower slope are more fractured than that on the upper slope.

We examined the test room. This was a room excavated to test how large an opening could be created and to test the convergence of the rock; i.e. how fast things would close in.

We then proceeded to the ore pass, which goes from the test room to a lower level. From there we went by vehicle to the lower level of the mine and the bottom of the main 36' diameter shaft. The shaft is concrete lined throughout and about 1,000 feet deep. There was some water ponded on the floor here, originating principally from rainfall events.

We then proceeded to the fresh water sump. This water does not contain oil and is pumped to the surface and allowed to discharge into a small settling basin without any other treatment. We also examined the oil sump area. This area has not been pumped for several months by the BLM. It contains water and an oily material that floats on the water. Some of the oil is the consistency of tar.

We then returned to the surface to have a follow-up discussion. We also examined the bore hole where the water and oil are pumped to the surface. The oil has been pumped into an above ground tank which is periodically drained and the oil transported to an approved disposal facility.

Lyle Stott indicated that Water Quality would not have any concerns with the BLM discontinuing their pumping of the oil since there was never a requirement by DWQ for them to pump the oil out of the mine. Discontinuing pumping will save the BLM some money and should allow ample time to implement a block closure in the mine sealing off the water/oil section. BLM proposes to construct a seal that will withstand the hydraulic pressure of the water, allow the lower sections to fill up with water and then abandon the mine. BLM proposes to close and seal the two metal ventilation doors on the main slope and place backfill in between them. In addition, the main portal would be backfilled out to the

surface from the doors. The rest of the facilities on site, the building, etc. would be locked up.

In conclusion, the BLM will submit their proposal to Water Quality and the Division for review. The Division is mainly an observer in this case, and will offer advise for compliance with the state regulations. Reclamation of the external surface facilities will be considered at a future date by the BLM and evaluated by the Division.

jb
cc:
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